

MEMORANDUM

STATE OF NEW JERSEY
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION

TO: Haig Kasabach (through) Frank Markewicz

FROM: George Klepp

SUBJECT: L.E. Carpenter Facility, Wharton

DATE: May 17, 1979

On May 5, 1979, the L.E. Carpenter facility in Wharton was inspected by myself, Robert Plumb of the Passaic Basin - M.S.&E., and Louellen D'Angelo of Surface Impoundment Assessment. Michael Havrisko of the Association of Environmental Commissions was also present. The site inspection was conducted by Mr. Henry Jarret, Chief Engineer for L.E. Carpenter. While the site-inspection was progressing, Stephan Swyhart of Passaic Basin M.S.&E. took water samples from the filter bed and a spring fed ditch on the property. The samples were taken to the State Lab in Trenton for analysis.

The L.E. Carpenter facility is located on the banks of the Rockaway River in Wharton. There are at least four (4) public water supply wells immediately downstream from the site. These wells are shallow; drawing water from the glacial material in the valley. Since these wells are shallow and on the banks of the river, there is no doubt that the river water is drawn into the wells at certain times of the year. Water samples were drawn from the #3 Wharton well and the #1 Dover well. These samples will also be analyzed by the State Lab.

Well records for these wells indicate that the Wharton Well #3 is a 24 inch by 18 inch diameter gravel packed well completed to a depth of 64.5 feet where bedrock was encountered. The interval screened runs from 39 feet to 64.5 feet and is composed primarily of coarse sand and gravel. The specific capacity of the well as determined by Geraghty and Miller in 1971 was 114 gpm/ft of drawdown.

The Dover well #1 is approximately 2200 feet down valley (south) of the Wharton Well #3. Well logs are not available for Well #1, however test well #5 drilled in 1973 and located approximately 700 feet south of Well #1 penetrated valley fill deposits of sand and gravel to a depth of 68 feet where a light grayish brown clay was encountered. The clay continued to a depth of 100 feet where bedrock was encountered. The Dover well #1 is 18 inch diameter, 68 feet deep and screened from 45-68 feet.

Both the Dover well #1 and the Wharton well #3 are good producers indicating high formation permeability of the sand and gravel aquifer.

The Carpenter plant is presently engaged in the production of plastic wall covering materials (plastic coated wall paper). Our files list the chemicals used by the plant for the production of these materials, (see attachment 1). Analysis of groundwater samples taken from trenches excavated on the L.E. Carpenter site by Elson T. Killam Associates Inc. in January 1979 (See attachment 2) indicate the presence of chemicals not

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utilized by Carpenter. Jarrett contends that most of the pollution was inherited from previous tenants of the site. While the company feels it is not the sole cause of the problem, they do accept the responsibility for the clean-up of the situation.

Presently, the maintenance and housekeeping on the site are in a deplorable state. The unsavory conditions on the site are:

- 1) a former sludge lagoon of indeterminate depth filled with material of unknown composition;
- 2) a discontinued filter bed filled with approximately two (2) feet of an iridescent-orange liquid (supposedly water);
- 3) buried (and semi-buried) rusted and broken 55 gallon drums, some of which may have contained PVC's;
- 4) a long trench (approximately four (4) feet deep according to Jarrett) with liquid material in it very similar to that in the filter bed though it is somewhat less iridescent;
- 5) many pits (at least 5) dug throughout the site and filled with material similar to that in the trench;
- 6) an oily-orange film on the banks of the river and on the water in the slack zones;
- 7) old tanks of dubious integrity (see attachment 3) are also on the site, eleven in all. The four tanks nearest the filter bed, once buried, have since been bouyed up to the surface by ground water. The company has stabilized these tanks on the surface. The same material that is evident in the filter bed is also present in the tank pit;
- 8) Areas around the other tanks on the site all exhibit unnatural coloration (black, orange, and red), indicating spillage in the past. The area immediately behind Building 14 also shows evidence of past spills;
- 9) There are three (3) discharge pipes directly into the Rockaway River along the concrete re-inforced bank on the site: one, according to Mr. Jarrett, is for cooling water from the plant. This pipe (5 inch) was observed discharging approximately five (5) gallons per minute of clear water; two, a surface run-off drain which had a "pillow" was over the orifice. According to Jarrett, the "pillow" was filled with an absorbant material to collect any undesirable material that may enter the inlets. The effectiveness of this method is highly doubtful considering the state of the facility, any surface run-off would have to be considered as contaminated substances; three, a pipe of unknown origin and function which may, according to Jarrett, provide drainage for the plant interior.

It should be noted that the water supply well for the plant (location unknown at present) has been closed by the company for some time, according to Jarrett, because of a high iron content.

The Department has been aware of the problem here for some time, but no action has as yet been taken since required permits from the Solid Waste Administration have not been forthcoming. The company has expressed a desire to under-take the clean-up operations as soon as possible (due to bad press publicity), and will work with the Department in all phases of the clean-up. It is urged that SWA take the steps necessary to facilitate the permitting so that clean-up steps may be undertaken soon. There is a very real and serious threat to the water supply of the area.

Recommended steps and procedures as to the clean-up of the facility will follow shortly.

cc: D. Hofman
D. Brown
D. Clark
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